(e) New P.L.R. scheme is applicable only for Major Port Trusts and Dock Labour Boards.

[Translation]

Thalassemia Patients

*520. SHRI HANSRAJ AHIR : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to provide any special financial assistance to Thalassemia patients;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government provide financial assistance and incentives to those institutions, which give help to such patients; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to check the increasing number of Thalassemia patients, and eradication of this disease in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI) : (a) and (b) Although no direct financial assistance is provided, exemption from Customs Duty has been extended on the import of Desferal injections and infusion pump. The marketing of an oral iron chelator Deferiprone for use under strict medical supervision has also been recently allowed which is less expensive and reported to have better level of patient's compliance.

(c) and (d) The mainstay of treatment of this genetic disorder is repeated blood transfusion, followed by iron chelation on continued basis. Blood Banks are being modernised with a view to improve availability of quality blood.

Curative treatment for Thalassemia is through Bone marrow transplantation. The Indian Council of Medical Research, supports an Advance Research Programme at Christian Medical College and Hospital, Vellore, for curative treatment for Thalassemia.

The ultimate aim is to prevent birth of afflicted children, for which genetic counselling and pre-natal diagnosis during pregnancy is available at a few centres in the country. The I.C.M.R., has initiated a multicentric study for assessing the feasibility of introducing ante-natal diagnosis in the National Family Welfare Programme.

[English]

Admission in Nursing Homes

4638. SHRI MANIKRAO HODLYA GAVIT : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the amount of Basic pay is written on the CGHS card alongwith photos of the family members of a retired Government servant;

(b) if so, whether it is in the knowledge of the Government that only the higher Basic pay contributors are given chances to get accommodation in Nursing Home as and when required at the time of admission, particularly in the RML Hospital;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the retired persons particularly whose basic pension is above Rs. 4,000/– is given admission in the Nursing Home; and

(d) if so, whether Government would like to give a serious thought and consider every case without considering basic pensions while giving admissions in the Nursing Homes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) As per criteria laid down the serving Central Government employees become eligible for Nursing Home facility if their basic pay is Rs. 2501/– or above at the time of admission to the Dr. RML Hospital. In case of pensioners, if their basic pension is Rs. 2501/- or above they too are entitled to Nursing Home Facility. However, pensioners drawing basic pension less than Rs. 2501/–but were drawing basic pay of more than Rs. 2501/– at the time of retirement can also avail of the Nursing Home Facility provided they opt for CGHS Pension Card on the basis of the last pay drawn.

(d) In view of (b) & (c) above, there is no such proposal under consideration for the time being.

Women Pills Users Facing Tumour Risk

4639. SHRI ANAND RATNA MAURYA : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item that appeared in 'The Times of India' dated June 25, 1996 under caption "Women pill-users face tumour risk";

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that while advertising for oral contraceptive for ladies it was very strongly and clearly recommended by doctors that use of such oral contraceptive pills does not have side-effect and these could be taken safely;

(c) the reasons why innocent people were made to believe for taking such prescriptions by the doctors;

(d) whether the Government propose to take steps to provide medical aid to the victims where needed; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SALIM IQBAL SHERVANI) : (a) Yes, Sir.